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New York

President: Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Pibulsonggram (Thailand), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Statements on the occasion of the sixth Africa Industrialization Day

The Acting President: I should like to read out a statement that the President of the General Assembly has requested that I deliver on his behalf on the occasion of the sixth Africa Industrialization Day. The statement reads as follows:

"This year's celebration of Africa Industrialization Day comes at a historic time. A few weeks ago, the largest assembly of leaders the world has ever seen came to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. In their Declaration, they pledged to

"'redirect [the Organization] to greater service to humankind, especially to those who are suffering and are deeply deprived'. (*resolution 50/6*)

"This, they proclaimed, is 'the practical and moral challenge of our time' (*ibid.*).

"No challenge is perhaps more critical to the international community today than the development of Africa. To many, Africa represents a plethora of problems: poverty, political instability, civil strife, poor economic performance, rapidly growing population, environmental degradation, hunger and malnutrition, disease and illiteracy. But to many more, Africa is a land of promise and opportunity.

"Africa is home to over 700 million people, half of whom are under the age of 15. The continent occupies nearly one quarter of the globe's land surface; yet, despite escalating birth rates, it still only accounts for a little more than 10 per cent of the world's population. It is a continent where human and natural resources abound, resources that are the building blocks of future prosperity.

"The challenge for Africa is to harness its vast resources in the attainment of sustainable social and economic development. Industrialization holds the key to meeting this challenge. Indeed, the General Assembly, in resolution 44/237 of 22 December 1989, proclaimed 20 November as Africa Industrialization Day. The observance of this Day symbolizes the international community's solidarity with the countries of Africa. Above all, it reaffirms the principle of partnership between Africa and the international community in the industrial development of the continent.

"Africans themselves acknowledge that they bear the main responsibility for their development. Over the past decade they have demonstrated a strong determination to overcome their developmental problems. A significant number of

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countries have initiated far-reaching policy reforms. The World Bank found that 23 out of 26 countries had adopted adequate monetary policies, 14 had done reasonably well in reducing their fiscal deficits, and 19 had made significant adjustments to exchange rates. The improved policy environment enabled eight countries to achieve or exceed the 6 per cent gross domestic product growth rate set under the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. In spite of the unfavourable external environment, some countries succeeded in reversing the trend of deindustrialization or in rehabilitating their industrial infrastructures. In fact, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has found that in many African countries the manufacturing sector grew faster than the economy during the period 1983 to 1993.

"Still, many consider the progress made by African countries too modest when compared with the enormity of the problems facing the continent today. Continued progress in meeting the daunting demands of development in Africa will depend a great deal on the support of the international community. Many African Governments have undertaken courageous reform measures, and the international community must abide by its political, economic and moral obligation to assist Africa. After all, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, as well as the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa, rests on the consensus view that the development of Africa is a priority concern of the international community.

"The United Nations system has played a key role in keeping the pressing concerns of Africa very much in the public mind. It has played a catalytic role in mobilizing international support for the development of the continent. UNIDO, in particular, has carried out these vital tasks in the field of industrial development. Along with the Economic Commission for Africa and the Organization of African Unity, UNIDO has actively promoted international economic cooperation for African industrialization within the framework of the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa.

"The theme of this year's celebration of Africa Industrialization Day is human-resource development. This theme is most appropriate at a time when we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, for our Organization can provide no better service to humanity than to help people and nations to realize their fullest potential. Human-resource development helps make this possible. Training and education enable people to grow and create opportunities for their own betterment. So too do economies. Industry, more than any other sector of the economy, needs trained and educated leaders, entrepreneurs, managers and workers if it is to thrive and grow.

"Africa deserves our solidarity and steadfast support as it strives to fulfil its hopes and aspirations for the future. As we celebrate Africa Industrialization Day, let this simple but worthy message be uppermost in our minds."

I now call on the representative of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Kouyaté (Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs): I am delighted to deliver the statement of the Secretary-General on the occasion of Africa Industrialization Day:

"Each year, on 20 November, we celebrate Africa Industrialization Day. This is the day when our thoughts turn to Africa and its progress on the path to industrialization. I am pleased to take part in the celebration of this Day as I have always attached the highest importance to the development of Africa.

"Over the past years, we have had ample opportunity to take stock of the critical situation in Africa. We know about the many problems confronting Africa today. We need to act in concert, in the spirit of true partnership, if we are to move ahead in addressing these problems. Africans are primarily responsible for their own development, but the international community bears a clear responsibility in supporting and sustaining their efforts at helping themselves. Together, we must take action on many fronts if we are to succeed.

"During the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva last summer, I spoke of the urgent need for the United Nations system to move simultaneously in several directions. First, we must strengthen regional institutions and promote intensified regional cooperation. Secondly, we must help African countries to diversify their economies, particularly

in the aftermath of the Uruguay Round trade agreements. Thirdly, we must deal with the problem of African debt. Fourthly, we must help African countries to establish effective social institutions. Finally, it is essential for the United Nations system to support the efforts of African countries to improve public education and vocational training. Africa's population, equipped with the proper skills and knowledge, is the driving force of development.

"This is why I am particularly delighted that the theme of this year's Africa Industrialization Day is human-resource development. Investing in people is investing in the future. It is an investment that yields returns far beyond its initial cost. Training opens the door to a better, brighter and more dignified future.

"The United Nations system has been at the forefront of international efforts to develop the human resources of Africa. Within their respective mandates, the various Funds, Programmes and specialized agencies have all made substantial contributions to these efforts. Here I would like to note, in particular, the close collaboration between the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Economic Commission for Africa and the Organization of African Unity in supporting industry-specific training and educational programmes in Africa. These organizations have effectively carried out training to upgrade technical and entrepreneurial skills and know-how among Africans in various branches of industry. Through these programmes, they have helped create jobs, raised incomes and improved the productivity of industry in the continent.

"On this note, I should like to mention also a special initiative, which I recently launched at the Administrative Committee on Coordination, on the development of Africa, a main aim of which is to build both human and institutional capacities in the continent.

"The celebration of Africa Industrialization Day should impart fresh impetus to the efforts of Africans to push ahead despite the difficulties. For those of us in the United Nations system, this Day should be a tangible reminder of the need to redouble our efforts and to do an even better job in assisting Africa. And for the larger community of nations let this Day be marked by renewed resolve to help Africa fulfil its hopes and dreams for a better and brighter future."

Agenda item 112

Human rights questions

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Special commemorative meeting to mark the United Nations Year for Tolerance

The Acting President: This morning, the General Assembly will, in accordance with the decision taken at its 3rd plenary meeting and pursuant to its resolution 49/213 of 23 December 1994, devote a special commemorative plenary meeting at its fiftieth session to mark the United Nations Year for Tolerance, under sub-item (b) of agenda item 112, "Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms".

On this occasion, I should like to read out a statement that the President of the General Assembly has requested that I deliver on his behalf:

"By its resolution 48/126 of 20 December 1993, the General Assembly proclaimed 1995 the United Nations Year for Tolerance, a year which happens to coincide with our Organization's fiftieth anniversary.

"International years and other commemorative landmarks come and go, carrying with them messages of hope and great expectations. As a general rule, they have in common that they deal with more or less quantifiable and measurable objectives such as literacy, communication, shelter for the homeless and many others, or that they address specific target groups such as women, refugees, disabled persons, youth. But the Year for Tolerance, while sharing the lofty ideals with its sister Years, has this particularity that it addresses an issue that is very difficult to measure by any yardstick. We are dealing here with a complex human phenomenon where prejudice, feelings, impulses, social hierarchies and irrational fear of the 'other' bring their forces together to make it difficult to design clear strategies of action.

"Yet we, who speak on behalf of our peoples and nations in this and other forums of the

international community, have the duty at least to address issues that are in our power, notably by creating the climate favourable to tolerance through the construction of democratic institutions, and the curbing of acts of intolerance, violence, discrimination and exclusion. And it is precisely here that international codes of conduct, monitoring and denunciation are significant and call for the strengthening of the international networks and organizations protecting human rights in the broad sense of the term, including civil, political, social, cultural and global rights. For we shall not forget that our Charter binds us, we, the peoples of the United Nations, to

> 'reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person ... and for these ends to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours'.

"It is likewise imperative to keep constantly present in our minds and hearts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirms that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and freedom of opinion and expression, and which, most significantly, stipulates in article 26 that education

> 'shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups'.

"I am informed that the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to whose wisdom we owe this initiative, adopted just a few days ago, at its twenty-eighth session, a Declaration of Principles on Tolerance and that, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 49/213, this instrument, together with a follow-up programme of action, will be submitted to this Assembly at its fifty-first session. On your behalf, I would like to express to UNESCO our appreciation for its system-wide action to coordinate the Year's activities.

"Beyond any given time-frame, let us all transcend our differences to renew our determined commitment to the promotion of the concept of tolerance as a prerequisite for a peaceful and non-violent world. Let us all hope that the rich intellectual contribution of the Year of Tolerance will be reflected in the everyday life of our peoples in full recognition of and respect for what could be the source of a fascinating richness: diversity."

I now call on the representative of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Kouyaté (Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs) (*interpretation from French*): I shall now read out the message of the Secretary-General to this meeting marking the end of the United Nations Year for Tolerance:

"By solemnly deciding to declare 1995 the "United Nations Year for Tolerance", the Organization sought to demonstrate — by that very declaration — its commitment and resolve in the service of the rights of the human person.

"Fifty years ago, the founding fathers of the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women. This is the commitment that we sought to renew together in 1995.

"This mobilization in support of tolerance is even more important today, since the hazards of the contemporary world have often led to a decline in social values and in shared beliefs. Uncertainty about tomorrow gives rise to a diffuse fear. At such times, fear of the 'other' grows and there is a great temptation to become self-absorbed. It is therefore all the more necessary to give peoples and nations, men and women of all countries, concrete reasons to hope and to believe in the future.

"We also know that the troubled time in which we live is conducive to the rise of all kinds of fundamentalism and all sorts of fanaticism that sow violence and death. We have, alas, recently seen examples of this.

"The year which is drawing to a close, therefore, does not mark the end of our effort in support of tolerance. Quite the contrary. On behalf of the noble objectives of the Charter, on behalf of the principles of the United Nations, and in the memory of those who gave their lives for their ideals, we must now, more than ever, say: 'no to intolerance'! 'no to fanaticism'! 'no to all kinds of micronationalism'.

"The United Nations must tirelessly continue to demonstrate to the men and women of this era that the prevailing openness in the world offers a formidable opportunity for the future, an unexpected chance to transcend our differences in order to attain what I once referred to as "the irreducible human element", that is, the quintessence of the values by which we define ourselves as a single human community.

"May this final celebration of the United Nations Year for Tolerance therefore also serve as the occasion on which we call for the redoubling of our efforts to close the apparent divides between us and overcome our momentary differences, our ideological and cultural barriers.

"Let all of us therefore continue together, well beyond this special year, to work within the United Nations to instil the spirit of tolerance in the heart of the human community" *(SG/SM/5814)*.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Çelem (Turkey): Today, after far too many millennia of wars, oppression and violence, the world stands poised at the threshold of the "culture of peace".

The human family can leave behind its ugly ages of ignorance and arrogance in order to start living in the lovely house of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi said:

"My house must have no doors or windows — so that winds and breezes from all sides may enter and pass through it freely."

We now possess the power to take that "house of nurturing winds" and to make it into the "palace of tolerance".

As the United Nations Year for Tolerance nears its end, we note with deep satisfaction and pride that we have come a long way since 1991, when the idea for an international tolerance year was born in the mind of a Turkish Minister of Culture and presented by the Turkish Republic to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) General Conference.

The United Nations Year for Tolerance has already raised public consciousness in scores of countries on all continents, for mutual understanding in the service of world peace, for the compelling need to bury history's poisonous harvest of hatred, for replacing destructive passion with constructive compassion.

Yet in recent years we have been witnessing many traumatic events which continue to ravage our conscience: assassination, terrorism, massacre, rape, racism and genocide. Sadly, we all realize that the world has a long, way to go before we can obliterate the evil of intolerance that fans the flames of religious wars, ethnic strife, fanaticism, brutality and mass murder.

UNESCO, entrusted by the United Nations with promoting the ethical and educational basis of international tolerance, is inspired by the Preamble of its Constitution, which proclaims:

"since wars began in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed".

Long after the end of this Year, UNESCO will continue to nourish mutual understanding through knowledge of the values and principles that could unite nations.

Unless we crush the many-breasted monster that suckles aggression and animosity, unless we stop drinking from the venomous spring of prejudice, we shall continue living in an age of darkness.

Lack of tolerance is the mother of all evil. But tolerance is the bare minimum for the establishment of a milieu of moral solidarity. It is merely the core of ethics before the world can enter the era of a better global society.

We must go beyond tolerance. The challenge is to learn to live in the hearts and minds of others, to honour the beliefs of others and, in all sincerity, to love others.

We have to transform tolerance into a creative strategy. Its ideals have been eloquently expressed by poets throughout the centuries. Listen to Mevlana Jalaluddin al-Rumi, the Anatolian Islamic mystic, who said in the thirteenth century:

"In all mosques, temples, churches I find one shrine alone."

and again

"Whatever you think of war, I am far, far from it;
Whatever you think of love, I am that, only that, all that."

It was this humanistic ideal that gave inspiration to the concepts of the International Year for Tolerance, to all the activities organized in Turkey and throughout the world, to the Meeting of Experts on Tolerance held in Istanbul on 16-17 April 1993, and to the Istanbul Conference of 8-9 February 1994, which produced the impressive Bosphorus Declaration on Tolerance. The regional conferences held by UNESCO in Brazil, India, Italy, Kenya, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and Tunisia culminated in early October of this year in the Istanbul Symposium on Tolerance. The climax of this extensive international effort is the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance, an eloquent document for a new world spirit and for an agenda to foster the culture of peace.

The Turkish Republic is proud to have made a sustained contribution, from beginning to end, at the United Nations, at UNESCO and elsewhere, to the Declaration and the Year for Tolerance. Yet we feel strongly that the end of the Year is the beginning of what should be an educational process for tolerance and peace. In fact, it should be a call to mobilization for a new world-wide Age of Enlightenment, based on the recognition that diversity need not lead to adversity, nor group identity to enmity.

The founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, proclaimed the principle: "Peace in our homeland, peace in the world". To secure that peace, it is essential to create "Peace in the heart, peace in the mind". In that way, the world could drive wars out of minds and hatred out of hearts.

Cultural differences have the power of not only constituting a richness of human experience for the entire world, but also creating the moral and intellectual foundation of universal harmony. Tolerance can be the quintessence of a new interaction, a new integration, based on enlightened altruism — one for all, all for one.

The international community holds the promise of dignity, prosperity, peace and happiness for all by achieving the solidarity of diverse cultures and heterogeneous ideas, provided that it can say: "*Vive la différence*! *Vive la tolérance*!" Our fervent hope is that the emerging culture of peace will make another Year for Tolerance unnecessary.

The words articulated by Mevlana Jalaluddin al-Rumi in the thirteenth century are still relevant:

"When weapons and ignorance come together, tyrants arise to devastate the world with their cruelty."

Every act of intolerance is a tyranny. Every act of hatred is a weapon of destruction. Every prejudice is cruelty to its victim as well as to its perpetrator.

Our prayers are for a world of tolerance, a house of understanding that is open, generous and full of happiness. In al-Rumi's words:

"What need is there for doors and walls in a house in which hearts are open to other hearts, where minds are open to other minds?"

I hope the legacy of the United Nations Year for Tolerance will be a future of creative tolerance for the coming generations.

Let me conclude with these words of the great Turkish poet of the thirteenth century, Yunus Emre:

"Don't look down on anyone; never break a heart:
The mystic must love all seventy-two nations."

The poet also says:

"We regard no one's belief as contrary to ours:
True peace is born when all faiths are united."

and again

"For those who truly love God and his ways,
All the people of the world are brothers and sisters."

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Spain, who will speak on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) *(interpretation from Spanish):* I am speaking on behalf of the European Union. Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania and Slovakia associate themselves with the content of this statement.

We regret that our special meeting today to commemorate the United Nations Year for Tolerance comes in the wake of the sad events that recently took place in Nigeria, which illustrate how far we still have to go in our struggle for tolerance in the world. The practice of tolerance is an essential element for the effective promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The rule of law is the true foundation of tolerance. We condemn the execution last 10 November of Mr. Ken Saro-Wiwa and his eight co-defendants. That act constituted a clear failure by Nigeria to honour its human rights commitments under the international instruments to which Nigeria is a party. The European Union has already taken measures with regard to the situation in Nigeria and is considering additional ones.

Fifty years ago the Charter of the United Nations was signed in San Francisco. In the preamble to the Charter, the signatories accepted the practice of tolerance as one of the commitments to be fulfilled in order to attain the goals of the United Nations. Intolerance in its various forms was then, as it is now, often a prelude to the breakdown of institutions and the outbreak of conflict. Nearly 100 armed conflicts have erupted since the end of the cold war. With few exceptions, these conflicts have not been between States, but have taken place within countries, often as a result of ethnic nationalistic and religious tensions. As the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) states,

> "Since wars began in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."

That is precisely the logic behind the United Nations Year for Tolerance, proclaimed by the General Assembly on the basis of a UNESCO initiative. Discrimination against persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities, acts motivated by racism and xenophobia, religious extremism and the marginalization and exclusion from society of vulnerable groups jeopardize peace and stability and erode democratic principles. The coexistence of different religions and cultures in most societies today is a fact. Accepting diversity means respecting other people's rights and freedoms. That respect, in turn, ensures a just and solid foundation for society.

Among the objectives of the United Nations Year for Tolerance are those of raising awareness of the dimensions and root causes of intolerance, mobilizing public opinion through education and developing practical guidelines to help policy-makers, educators and institutions solve problems related to intolerance.

The General Assembly invited UNESCO to lead those endeavours. This year the Organization has focused on showing, through cultural and educational activities all over the world, how tolerance is linked to peace and stability. It has also provided background materials to people and institutions involved in education for tolerance. UNESCO has coordinated the Year effectively, combining messages in the media and actions in the field with a series of conferences and debates on education, culture, democracy and human rights and the interrelationships between them all.

In addition to the United Nations system, other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and Governments themselves were asked to contribute. In the European context, two years ago the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, which now has 38 European States as members, adopted a Declaration and Plan of Action against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance, with a view to mobilizing resources in a campaign against those phenomena and promoting tolerance and open societies. Paralleling the United Nations Year for Tolerance, its focus is also on education and the role of the media.

The Plan of Action stresses analysis of legislation and policies in this area and the evaluation of their effectiveness, as well as the necessary cooperation of non-governmental organizations. The European Committee against Racism and Intolerance, which is an important component of these efforts, is working to strengthen guarantees against all forms of discrimination and to evaluate the effectiveness of the range of measures adopted by member States to combat racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance. We welcome the participation of youth in the launching, in December 1994, of the European youth campaign against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance.

The European Union has also taken steps, in the context of an overall strategy to combat acts of xenophobic racism and violence, to improve cooperation and the exchange of information in the fields of education, social affairs and judicial matters. All those efforts are complemented by actions taken at the national level. Civil society which is the ultimate target of these and other actions, must also participate in these efforts if they are to be effective and sustained.

Tolerance must become one of the keynotes of social discourse. To settle for less would be an affront to human dignity. It would also mean that ethnic divisiveness and religious intolerance would continue to exacerbate poverty, destabilize peaceful development and hinder the achievement of peace. It would also spell failure regarding one of the goals of the peoples of the United Nations, set down in the Charter 50 years ago.

The European Union wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the objectives of the United Nations Year for Tolerance. We continue to strive to make our societies even more tolerant. Our debate today must signal that the commitment to tolerance is shared by all.

The Acting President: I now call on Mr. Simon Wiesenthal, Special Envoy of the Austrian Government.

Mr. Wiesenthal (Austria): It is a great honour for me to be allowed to speak to this audience, as the representative of Austria, at the end of the Year For Tolerance. In four years we will be standing at the end of this century, which has been rightly termed "a century of crimes". Thus there is a need to speak about tolerance and also to act on this principle.

Only a short time ago, the world was shocked by the senseless assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Tel Aviv. There could be no better example of what can happen as a result of lack of tolerance, the inability to deal with differences of opinion in any other way than with aggression and murder. It made clear to us once again how much hatred and how little tolerance there are in the world.

In this century I have myself seen communism become a form of government under Stalin and — thankfully — I have seen its downfall. I have seen the rise of National Socialism under Hitler — and I have lived to see its downfall as well. Both of these regimes adopted measures that cost millions of lives. In the Soviet Union the victims were mainly Soviet citizens, the exact numbers of which are still unknown, as all figures used so far have been estimates. The Nazi regime was responsible for the deaths of millions of foreign nationals. Altogether, about 50 million people, including 6 million Jewish victims, were killed as a result of the war and the innumerable crimes committed in the countries occupied by Nazi Germany. Together, these two dictatorships extinguished about 100 million human lives during this century.

Underlying both Stalinism and National Socialism were two fundamentals: hate and technology.

Even after the First World War, with its millions of victims, many nations had already pledged to never again wage war. On 27 August, 1928, Germany, Great Britain, Belgium, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the United States of America signed the so-called Kellogg Agreement, with the aim of ensuring peace. This was followed by a series of disarmament conferences to reduce arms of all kinds. All these efforts were cut short, however, when National Socialism came to power in Germany. Another terrible world war began and, with it, the loss of human rights for the suffering civilian populations. There were again millions of victims, and the Holocaust especially, the systematic extermination of 6 million Jews, has gone down in history as an unprecedented example of crime. The Holocaust has come to serve as a warning for the future of mankind and must continue to serve as a reminder for future generations. At the Nuremberg trials, when it came to judging those responsible for the Second World War after National Socialism had collapsed, the charges also included explicit reference to the violations of the Kellogg Agreement.

As long as there are still survivors of the two dictatorships to which I have referred and their satellites, these people — and not only those directly affected — will ask themselves: What has to be done in order to prevent a repetition of the terrible atrocities that have taken place in our century? Should there be more disarmament conferences? And what about the other fundamental that fanned the flames of aggression at the onset of all these immense crimes — the element of hate?

So far, the holding of conferences aimed at reducing hatred has not even been considered. How then shall and can one ban hatred from people's hearts — or at least reduce it? If we succeed in reducing this hatred in individuals, then politicians — who are paying increased attention to people's feelings and also incorporating this in their policies — will see to it that more emphasis is placed on the importance of tolerance in our societies. The younger generation must be warned against prejudice, especially against the prejudice of racial hatred, which has always led only to immeasurable human suffering.

Until recently we could still believe that wars could be prevented if conflicts were solved through talks and agreements, under the motto: "As long as talks are going on, there will be no shooting." Today, however, in the former Yugoslavia we are made to see hatred gaining the

upper hand again and becoming the motivating force for the most atrocious deeds.

Please allow me to tell you about an institution in Los Angeles that was named after me. The Simon Wiesenthal Center has built a large museum called the "Museum of Tolerance". If you have an opportunity to visit this Museum, you will be vividly informed about human-rights violations and genocide — not only about the Holocaust against the Jews, but also about the genocide against the Armenians, the people of Cambodia, and so on. The Museum's impressive audio-visual presentations implore the visitor to ask: "How can we prevent a repetition of such crimes in the future?" At the exit of the Museum stands a sign with the answer spelled out in large neon letters: "TOLERANCE". Tolerance is the prerequisite for the peaceful coexistence of all people on this Earth and the only alternative to the hatred that led to the horrible crimes against humanity. Hatred is the evil opposite of tolerance. Hatred instils in the young the concept of an enemy even in early years; it leads to radical words which are then followed by radical action.

I would therefore like to make the following proposal: Let us try to organize a worldwide conference aimed at reducing hate. Technology without hatred can be so very beneficial for mankind, but in conjunction with hatred it leads to disaster. The most important participants in such a conference — which should of course be held under the patronage of the United Nations — would be representatives of the monotheistic and other religions. Through religious networks the greater part of mankind could be reached. The representatives of the various religions, in keeping with their moral duties, would work for mutual respect and support among men against hatred. By spreading positive messages in churches, temples, mosques and synagogues, they can reach more people than all political parties put together. If religious representatives can agree to make the gradual elimination of hatred a major common concern, they will also find ways of informing and influencing their believers throughout the world.

Being an Austrian, I could imagine such an international conference taking place in our small country, located at the centre of Europe. In the course of its history, Austria has frequently been the scene of hate; today, however, it lives in perfect amity with all its neighbours, unstrained by any claims on lands outside its existing borders. Our country is an obvious international meeting-place, having often been the site of international events in the past. Moreover, all steps to strengthen tolerance and reduce hate would be actively supported by Austria's Government and its population. In this connection, I should like to point out that in the past 50 years the small republic of Austria, in contrast to other, significantly larger countries, has achieved great things where humanitarian aid for refugees — the most unfortunate victims of hate — is concerned.

I should personally be very pleased if my proposal to hold such a conference in Vienna were to be accepted by the representatives of other countries who have spoken, or will speak, to this Assembly on this occasion to mark the Year for Tolerance. As a survivor of the Nazi period — my wife and I lost 89 family members in the Holocaust — I have dedicated my life to the struggle for justice. The title of my last book is *Justice, Not Vengeance*, because my work was never motivated by hate or revenge. I would therefore feel very honoured if many people of good will and with the firm intention to conquer the hate in this world were to come to Vienna to take part in a conference having this aim.

I thank the Assembly kindly for its attention and convey to it warm greetings from the people and the Government of Austria. And I promise that we will continue to work for tolerance and human rights.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Chkheidze (Georgia) (*interpretation from Russian*): I should like to take this opportunity once again to present my respects to you, Sir, and to my colleagues who, together with you, have organized the work of the Commemorative Session.

Today's meeting is especially significant. The ideals of the Year for Tolerance proclaimed by the United Nations are the very principles and way of life that have enabled my people to survive during their long history and to preserve for world civilization their unique culture and a multitude of monuments, three of which are included on the list of 29 monuments that constitute a world heritage.

Having endured repeated and devastating invasions, Georgia again and again rose from the ashes without losing any of its inherent tolerance and respect for other nations and religions. Islam and Judaism long ago found a place in a State that was Christian from the fourth century on, and more than 80 ethnic groups retained and developed their cultures — not to mention the political

rights accorded national minorities. Is this not an example of tolerance and of a culture of mutual understanding and mutual enrichment?

At the same time, Georgia's example proves that traditions and a culture of communication are not enough by themselves. Alas, the time bombs planted at the inception of the Soviet Union have exploded.

Aggressive separatism, well prepared and organized, took us unawares. The Communist slogans of the separatists, directed against the drive for independence, provoked bloodshed, creating fertile ground for ethnic confrontation. The history of the so-called Abkhazian conflict in Georgia is well known to the international community.

The resolutions and appeals of authoritative international organs are falling on deaf ears. Hundreds of thousands of people have become refugees in the territory of their own homeland and have lost their kith and kin. The tragedy of the situation is aggravated by the fact that the next generation of the two peoples have developed hatred towards each other.

The example of Georgia has shown that the roots of intolerance must be sought not only in poverty and ignorance, in vainglory and fear, or in prejudices generated by ignorance, but also in the political nature of conflicts.

The ideals of tolerance require not only declarations, but also the most active defence. The multiplication of these ideals and finding resources for that purpose will be repaid a thousandfold in the future. At the same time, these efforts must be commensurate with the heavy burden and the difficult mission that must be assumed by our generation and today's world community.

This implies the most severe approach to evil-doers, to those extremist forces that threaten security and send our children to war. All mechanisms must be activated, ranging from the prosecution of specific individuals in courts of law to the economic and political isolation of the sources of hatred, including, in extreme cases, coercive measures. The task of a peacemaker is arduous but blessed.

In keeping with the letter and the spirit of today's meeting, I should like to underline the position of my Government, which is that of devotion to the peaceful settlement of all conflicts. We still hope that reason will prevail over insanity. We fully realize that all wars, in the final analysis, were lost by all the participants. Our common task is to develop a culture of tolerance as the manifestation of the new global interdependence, where the security of us all is based on understanding, trust and cooperation.

Georgia, aware of the significance of the Year for Tolerance, was able to organize an international forum dedicated to this event. With the help of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, an international forum for "For Solidarity Against Intolerance, for a Dialogue of Cultures" was held in Tbilisi. It brought together some 150 cultural figures from 40 countries. The documents of this forum have been circulated as General Assembly documents A/50/173 and A/50/446.

The Istanbul Symposium dedicated to the Year for Tolerance was also an important event. Other efforts have evidently also been made to commemorate the Year for Tolerance appropriately, and programmes of action have been worked out in accord with the programmes of the international conferences held under United Nations auspices, and with the Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000. They are aimed at establishing and consolidating the ideals of tolerance, and they deserve the most careful attention and support in every way, in particular the programmes that provide for youth to contribute to bringing peoples together.

There is a need to approach in greater depth the question of enhancing the role of the intellectual professionals, women's organizations and religious leaders in the struggle against intolerance, especially in regions of conflict. International festivals must be encouraged more actively. The language of love and understanding should be carried to the most troubled parts of our world.

The Tbilisi forum is judged by everyone who took part in it as a contribution, however small, to securing a peaceful future for all people, to building a safer, fairer and more humane world.

We believe that the idea of a general confirmation of tolerance as a priority would enjoy considerable support should we proclaim an international day of tolerance and forgiveness with wide-ranging publicity for preparations at both the national and the international levels. We would enlist support by calling on religious and relevant non-governmental organizations around the world to help to celebrate this day as it should be celebrated, a day which would unite the ideals of all the

religions of the world and the nature of mankind — which is to love and to create for the cause of love.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Peru.

Mr. Guillén (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation has attached great importance to the commemoration of the United Nations Year for Tolerance. In 1994, we co-sponsored resolution 49/213, and today we are speaking not only to commemorate the international Year for Tolerance but also to reaffirm our desire to see the international community promote tolerance as a way of life.

As the Charter of the United Nations states in its preamble, "to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours" are among the aims to be accomplished in order to prevent wars and maintain peace, to reaffirm the worth of the human person, and to establish conditions under which justice can be maintained and social progress can be promoted.

Moreover, the principle of tolerance, understood not as indifference, concession or condescension but as openness, respect, solidarity, civilized coexistence, pluralism, and freedom of conscience and religion, is expressed in the basic instruments of international law which govern international relations between States and the universal standards of respect for the rights of the person, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights itself.

Accordingly, we encourage the efforts of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), whose General Conference, by a mandate of the General Assembly, recently developed and approved the guidelines and declaration of principles on tolerance, which my country now pledges to respect and carry out, since the practice and promotion of tolerance are a solid basis for life within a society and necessary to guarantee peace and economic and social development.

Children and youth are often exposed to conflicts over which they have no control. It is therefore important that our work should begin with education as to the importance of solving problems without resorting to violence. In this context, education plays a decisive role and requires a comprehensive approach. Only the firm commitment of members of the international community to promote respect for peace, peaceful international coexistence, the international legal order and respect for treaties can enable children and young people to thrive in a climate which is conducive to mutual respect and in which there is no room for feelings of hostility and hatred that can for generations affect the relations of peace and development that should exist between peoples. In our opinion, this is all also part of the international responsibilities which States assume upon signing the United Nations Charter and becoming Members of this Organization.

We must teach the rejection of intolerance and violence, and we must also encourage constructive dialogue, understanding and friendship between nations and ethnic and religious groups. In that way, we will finally be able to build a culture of peace at the global level, in which education mirroring this will be based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, rejection of violence and all forms of discrimination, and support for the principles of justice, solidarity and mutual understanding.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Slovenia.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): Today's commemorative meeting of the General Assembly is an occasion of particular importance. It is devoted to tolerance, a universally shared value which transcends the needs of any particular region, of any cultural or religious tradition and of any political system. It is universal and perhaps most precious in a time of rapid change — such as the time in which we live.

More than 200 years ago, in 1762, Voltaire, the great French philosopher and one of the founding fathers of the doctrine of human rights, wrote his seminal treatise on tolerance. He proved beyond doubt that tolerance is essential for peace and prosperity. As such, it has a profound importance for every society and for mankind as a whole. The concept of the wisdom of tolerance — comprehensively expressed by Voltaire — had been shared, and indeed preceded by, the teaching of other philosophers and had already been a part of the religious tradition professed by all major religions of the world. Its fundamental importance, therefore, was not a mere invention, nor had it been imposed.

Understood as a value which encompasses universal pluralism and a genuine acceptance of cultural diversity, the idea of tolerance represents, first of all, a valuable intellectual and practical framework within which the vitally important norms of a good society and a peaceful world can be developed.

The United Nations has in its first 50 years of existence contributed an important share to the effort to build such a world. In retrospect, one may say that the larger part of that share has been contributed at the level of normative regulation, while much is left to be desired at the practical level of implementation. The evolution of norms of international law has been most dynamic in our time, a fact which is to a large measure due to the work of the United Nations. Furthermore, and perhaps even more important, the United Nations has succeeded in developing a coherent system of norms necessary for the protection and promotion of human rights. The World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993, reaffirmed the universality of these norms.

It is also understood that universality does not mean uniformity and that the process of the implementation of universal norms must provide space for instruments which contribute to the realization — that is, the real attainment — of these norms in specific circumstances in different regions. In the coming decades of the United Nations, the development and functioning of such instruments will be among the most important challenges facing the Organization.

The challenge to the actual attainment of the postulate of tolerance is often expressed in the form of the following question: What needs to be done when a society — or the international community as a whole — is confronted with the intolerant? Sometimes the importance of this question is radicalized by the fact that the intolerant propagate or even use violence in pursuit of an agenda of intolerance.

Two weeks ago, the world witnessed the assassination of a political leader who laboured for peace and a permanent political arrangement based on the ideal of mutual tolerance and friendship among peoples that had been at war for decades.

The armed conflicts of our time are the most brutal expression of intolerance and a stark reminder that the membrane of the norms of tolerance and civilized behaviour is still thin and can be quickly destroyed.

How should the organized international community react to these challenges? Again, the wisdom of philosophers like Voltaire is helpful: When intolerance reaches criminal proportions it cannot be accepted or condoned. Obviously, in defining what is criminal, such principles as legitimacy, legality and proportionality must be observed. Furthermore, any prosecution of criminals must observe all the requirements of due process of law. However, not for a single moment should there be any doubt that those responsible for crimes resulting from intolerance will be prosecuted and punished irrespective of the religious or political convictions which may have motivated them.

There comes a time when a wide range of existential issues for mankind are reflected in a single situation. The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is such a situation today. It is a test case of the maturity of the international community, and much of our common future will depend on the way that situation is treated. The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina began as a result of plans for territorial aggrandizement and the nationalistic intolerance unleashed in that context. It has resulted in genocide of the Muslim people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is a situation in which it will be most difficult to establish real peace.

If real peace is to be established, it is absolutely vital that tolerance be restored, which in turn requires both the prosecution and the punishment of persons responsible for the genocide and for other gross violations of international humanitarian law. I emphasize that no political compromises can be accepted in this regard.

It is sometimes alleged that the genocide in Bosnia cannot be compared with the Holocaust against the Jews in the Second World War, and that there are guilty individuals on all sides in the war in Bosnia. While this is true, it should not obfuscate the essence of the issues at hand, and the essence is this: that the international community cannot afford not to punish the perpetrators of a genocide the facts of which are proven beyond reasonable doubt. Violations of the basic principles upon which the universality of human rights rests have to be rejected in an effective and meaningful way. Any form of acceptance of what has been called in the press an "even distribution of guilt", which has been hitherto advocated by some, would undermine the credibility of the international community. Instead, the principle of the criminal responsibility of individuals, irrespective of their rank or status, must be upheld in the interest of peace.

Therefore, if the very basis upon which the General Assembly is today discussing the importance of tolerance is to be upheld, the international community must respond with determination and vision to the tragic case of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is a necessary condition for making the efforts for the implementation of human

rights credible and the ideal of tolerance truly relevant in real life.

The Acting President: I call next on the representative of Andorra.

Mr. Minoves-Triquell (Andorra) (*interpretation from French*): Today I am a happy man, able in this Hall to proclaim the merits of tolerance. I was born, raised and grew up in a small country in the Pyrenees, the Principality of Andorra. Ours is a State formed by peace, by 700 years of peace and freedom. Owing to our isolation and to our small size in a world of giants, owing to the roughness of the conditions in which they lived, my ancestors had to learn, and did learn, to live as a community and to respect others. Owing to our location in a border area ever marked by war and conflict, we had to learn, and did learn, to practice the art of hospitality, to welcome refugees, to engage in diplomacy and dialogue. Like many of my colleagues in this Hall, from countries large and small, I had the good fortune to be raised in an environment that bred tolerance, thanks to the history of my country and to the teachings of my family and my teachers. And I therefore welcome, on behalf of my fellow Andorrans and of the Government of the Principality of Andorra, the occasion that brings us together today, on 21 November.

Mr. Peerthum (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Only a few weeks ago I spoke to the General Assembly of the importance of youth and education. I must reiterate how critical it is that the youth of the third millennium, which we are approaching, be educated in a spirit of tolerance and reason. Mankind has destructive capabilities that sometimes exceed our understanding. As we approach the end of the century — of the millennium, indeed — it is fashionable to cry fatalism. I am not among those who do this. But who can guarantee that human beings, guided by their instincts and passions and by the deep-seated energies that inspire them as often to the noblest of actions as to the most villainous of atrocities, will not face off some time during the next thousand years, with the ultimate ferocity made possible by present-day technical capabilities?

In my humble opinion, tolerance, respect for others, and, indeed, the famous positive-sum game which shows that humans are not merely predators of their fellow humans, constitute the most telling response to that question. That is why I firmly advocate that young people be educated in these values at the risk of seeming intolerant of those who disagree with them. Tolerance is a virtue, a moral value that the United Nations has an mandate to disseminate. After all — to the disgruntlement of those who do not share the values of the United Nations — the Organization was, as my Minister for Foreign Affairs observed during the general debate, founded on the basis of solid values, at the close of the Second World War, in the wake of the Holocaust which Mr. Wiesenthal just evoked, at a time when evil, having lately prevailed, gave way to the glowing good of the concepts of peace, tolerance and development: the pillars of the United Nations.

M.S. Bates wrote these well-framed words:

(*Spoke in English*)

"I shall not try to write the history of intolerance: that would be to write the history of the world".

(*Spoke in French*)

During the history shared by all mankind since the dawn of time, intolerance has seemed natural, even desirable: as Bossuet put it, why be tolerant of those who disagree when one is certain of one's beliefs or actions — especially when that certainty is of Divine origin?

In the seventeenth century, John Locke began to ponder the nature of religious intolerance. His *Epistola de Tolerantia* was one of the first modern attempts to articulate the concept of tolerance. That beginning was confined to intolerance in religion, and even then went no further than demonstrating the irrationality of intolerance, which, according to Locke, is of no value to the intolerant in really changing the inner beliefs of those they persecute.

As Ambassador Danilo Türk of Slovenia has already aptly pointed out, some decades later Voltaire, in his *Treaty on Tolerance* — after denouncing the hasty execution of Jean Calas, a member of a religious minority in Toulouse who had been wrongly accused of murdering his son — added that the supposed right to intolerance was

"absurd and barbaric; it is the law of the tiger — worse, indeed, since tigers kill in order to eat, whereas we crush each other for the sake of paragraphs."

Voltaire proclaimed as a major governing principle of the law of nature — and for him therefore of the law of man — the maxim: "Do not do unto others what you do not want done to yourself". Is not that the first principle of tolerance, as nurtured in various religious traditions? Religions often the guardians of certainties, have also been a philosophical source of tolerance — a source that we should acknowledge and put to use in order to avoid the fanaticisms, which, human nature being what it is, have a tendency to flourish when least expected.

In 1776, Thomas Jefferson, in the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America, wrote:

(spoke in English)

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

(spoke in French)

In the nineteenth century John Stuart Mill spoke not so much of tolerance as of liberty. His argument in support of tolerance is based on liberty. He starts from a very positive conception of the diversity that is so natural among human beings, and notes that unless liberty in society is affirmed, individuals will be compelled by social opinion and intolerant laws to lose themselves in uniformity and the banality of similarity, which will hinder progress.

For Mill, tolerance is necessary because liberty directly determines the autonomy of the individual. Obviously, even for him there are limits to this liberty and to tolerance. In his *Essay on Liberty*, he wrote:

(spoke in English)

"In the conduct of human beings towards one another, it is necessary that general rules should for the most part be observed, in order that people may know what they have to expect; but in each person's own concerns, his individual spontaneity is entitled to free exercise."

(spoke in French)

Let us think for a few moments about the brief remarks that follow. The inalienability of the liberty of the individual underlies the internationally accepted concepts which, at the end of the twentieth century, constitute the norms of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable in our quest for human dignity. Human rights, which are frequently the basis for action in the Third Committee of the General Assembly, presuppose acceptance of individual liberty as a precious possession, and hence tolerance of the ideas or actions of human beings, provided that they do not strike at that liberty or at the integrity and dignity of another human being. Thus, one must know how to be intolerant towards intolerance, for tolerance's sake.

In general terms, as long as Peter or Paul does me no harm, it should matter little to me if he behaves in a way that disgusts me or that my own beliefs lead me to think is morally wrong. I can talk to him and explain my views, but in no case can I become intolerant, as that would carry the seeds of confrontation.

I cannot state my position any more clearly than by saying that I am firmly on the side of tolerance. But, paradoxically, those of us who have come together today to celebrate tolerance must take great care to ensure that it becomes more and more widespread and that those who want to make it disappear — those who took action in Nigeria a few days ago, those who justified the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, or those responsible for the death of Prime Minister Rabin in Israel — that all those and others do not achieve their aim. Just as the democracies needed courage and endurance in this century to overcome the great dangers of totalitarianism, the partisans of tolerance will need courage and endurance in the face of the forces of obscurantism.

In the course of this statement I have referred to philosophers who have reflected on tolerance and liberty. During this century, many others have taken up the subject — particularly Rawls, but also, for example, Raz, Nozick and Dworkin, all of whom have re-examined Mill's theories using new criteria to assess them. Susan Mendus, in *Toleration and the Limits of Liberalism*, rightly points out that human beings are not merely independent and free, as we understand from the work of Mill, but also interdependent because they live in society. She says:

(spoke in English)

"We should tolerate — and more than tolerate — if we expect to create a society in which people can identify their good with the good of others, and come to feel that they speak through their society and that it speaks for them."

(spoke in French)

Mendus's argument deserves more attention and a more critical approach than are possible in a brief statement. Let me, however, observe that her assertion that "We should ... more than tolerate" is very appealing.

I began my speech by saying that I am a happy man — happy with my passion for tolerance, and happy to be able to express it among the delegations here. Happiness — the happiness which Thomas Jefferson inscribed in the Declaration of Independence — is a deeply personal thing; at the most we manage to define what makes us unhappy, but not what brings Happiness — with a capital letter. Tolerance is perhaps not sufficient, since the word itself implies that one does not approve of what one is tolerating. To be happy, people need respect and esteem as well. Of course we must argue for tolerance, but, if we still have some energy left, we can also try to do a little more and to spread love.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Israel.

Mr. Yaacobi (Israel): The principal commitment of the international community to tolerance was enshrined in the Preamble of the United Nations Charter. The Member States committed themselves to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours. The founders of this body understood that only by encouraging tolerance among the peoples of the world could the scourge of war be eliminated. Only thus could the world hope to survive and progress.

We come from different parts of the world. We differ in colour, in culture, in religion. We have different beliefs and opinions, but all of us are human beings.

Judaism places the notion of tolerance and respect for others as one of its highest ideals. Rabbi Akiva, the great Jewish sage, was once approached by a non-Jew who wished to convert to Judaism. Said the wise Rabbi:

> "The only thing you must learn: Do not unto your fellow what is hateful to yourself."

Judaism has always encouraged discussion and disagreement, but within the bounds of tolerance. Indeed, our entire oral law, the Talmud, is based on the discourse between the schools of thought *Beit Hillel* and *Beit Shamai*. The debates between the two schools, no matter how heated, were confined to the realm of discussion. Thus, the murderer of Yitzhak Rabin acted in complete contravention of the morals and principles of Judaism. He removed himself from the entire Jewish people.

Our history is full of tragic examples of mistreatment at the hands of others. We have felt the pain of intolerance and we have learned its bitter lessons.

Prejudice against Jews reached its climax in the first half of this century. In the 1930s, the Nazis of Germany came to power espousing a racist ideology based on the superiority of one group over another. Jews, along with several other groups, were singled out by the Nazis for annihilation. Between 1939 and 1945, six million Jews were exterminated by the Nazis for the sole crime of having been born Jewish.

The return of the Jewish people to its homeland in Israel was based on the idea of creating a moral and just society in which equality and mutual respect would prevail. In its Declaration of Independence, the State of Israel promised to uphold the full social and political equality of all of its citizens, without distinction of race, creed or sex.

To our detriment, our region has known many years of hatred and war. Israel has fought for many years in order to achieve a lasting and equitable peace with its neighbours based on coexistence and mutual respect.

During the past three years, we have witnessed a dramatic change in the prospects for peace in the Middle East. Our goal is to transform the agreements being forged on the ground today into real cooperation and neighbourly relations tomorrow.

Sadly, the progress achieved between Israel and its neighbours over the past several years has been ignored by some in our region. There are still those who refuse to accept the new reality. There are radicals and extremists on both sides. There are those who place bombs on buses or who attempt through murder and other inhuman actions to stop the due process of peace. These people are out of touch with the new reality. They represent a fanatic approach of hatred and political myopia.

As recent events in the Middle East have proved, it is a slippery slope from angry rhetoric to violent actions. The dehumanization of a nation or a group of people on the basis of their beliefs or view of the world cannot be reconciled with any definition of tolerance. The world

has witnessed these phenomena too many times during the twentieth century. The international community must be aware that violent rhetoric often leads to violent action. We must accept the responsibility to keep disputes within democratic tolerance.

During this violent century, some of the world's greatest leaders have been brutally taken from us by the enemies of peace and progress. Mahatma Gandhi, Anwar al-Sadat, Martin Luther King Jr. and John F. Kennedy were all snuffed out by assassins' bullets.

I have mentioned already that two weeks ago, to our great sorrow, this happened in Israel. The murder of Prime Minister Rabin was an act of fanatics, of fundamentalists, of radicals. The murderer stands outside the scope of Judaism, universal morality and democratic tolerance. He murdered a great statesman, a courageous warrior for peace, a man of great integrity and devotion. Yitzhak Rabin will be missed not only by Israel and the entire Jewish people, but by peoples throughout the Middle East and the whole world. His path towards peace and reconciliation will be continued; his vision will be fulfilled.

There is no coming to terms with what has happened. We can only fight against it by educating our children, by raising our voices in protest, by refusing to surrender to hatred and intolerance and by enhancing peace.

The Year for Tolerance has come to an end, but the need for tolerance has not. The international community must remain committed not to the notion of tolerance, but to its attainment on a day-to-day basis.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Myanmar.

Mr. Mra (Myanmar): Half a century ago, intolerance among nations was at its peak, with certain nations trying to impose their will on others. As a result, a savage and violent war ensued and untold sorrow was brought upon mankind. Waking up to the vicious consequences of the lack of tolerance in inter-State relations, humanity enshrined the virtue of tolerance in the Preamble of the United Nations Charter and prescribed the practice of tolerance among nations as the primary means of achieving the aim of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

With the end of the cold war, ideological confrontation was replaced by a new global order in which international security has been threatened with increasing conflicts of various natures. Intolerance reared its vicious head again as a new sense of freedom from ideological bondage led to mounting tensions and strife in many parts of the world.

In these circumstances, it is imperative to promote the spirit of tolerance and to strengthen its practice. It is therefore most fitting for the United Nations to have been able to proclaim 1995 as United Nations Year for Tolerance at the suggestion of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In this regard, my delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Director-General of UNESCO for the extensive efforts which he has made for the programme of the Year and his appeals and speeches addressing the question of tolerance. My delegation also thanks other United Nations agencies that have been involved in promoting the concept of tolerance. Thanks to their concerted efforts, the danger of intolerance and its manifestations has been made clearer to the world community.

Many religions and various thinkers of all ages have preached tolerance and its virtues over many centuries. No one has ever denied that tolerance at all levels is beneficial. It has now been widely and undeniably recognized that tolerance is essential for the establishment and maintenance of world peace and prosperity. While my delegation is wholly supportive of attempts now being made to instil the spirit of tolerance in the mind of the individual, we hold that tolerance, as a factor for peace, should be practised to the fullest extent possible in inter-State relations.

To judge by history, this is the area where intolerance has found its full expression. Attempts to impose a different system of values and norms on another country should be avoided, in recognition of the diversity in cultures, beliefs and lifestyles. To do otherwise would be tantamount to disregard for and contempt of values and norms different from one's own. We hope that understanding of and respect for the cultures, beliefs and lifestyles of other countries will also be the focus of our attempts in establishing the culture of tolerance.

Myanmar is a society with a culture of tolerance. Myanmar culture goes back many centuries. Gentleness, compassion and tolerance are its hallmarks. Religious tolerance is a deep-rooted social and cultural trait in Myanmar which every citizen of the land upholds and observes. Although a majority of Myanmar nationals are

Buddhists, other major religions — Islam, Christianity and Hinduism — flourish alongside Buddhism.

Intolerance based on ethnicity is a factor in the resurgence of ethnic-nationalist conflicts around the world. If a stable and peaceful world is to be bequeathed to posterity, ways must be explored and identified to tackle this most intractable issue facing us on the threshold of the twenty-first century. We believe that wise and far-sighted policy moves by the Governments concerned are urgently needed.

Myanmar is made up of 135 national races. For reasons both historical and geographical, some of Myanmar's national races were marginalized and excluded from its national life. Their long exclusion from the mainstream of Myanmar society had been cause for mistrust and misunderstanding. For these reasons, reintegration of our national brethren into the national life of the country has become a top priority on the national political agenda of Myanmar. Towards that end, the Government has taken energetic and comprehensive measures for the development of border areas and national races since May 1989. The Government has set up a separate ministry — the Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs — and expended over 2,842 million kyats (US$ 400 million) for infrastructure-building in the border areas. To prevent the continued marginalization of our national races, the Government has, among other things, provided the national races with access to communication systems and information services. In addition, the Government has built more roads and bridges in border areas than had been done in the past. We believe that these measures will contribute towards greater understanding and tolerance among the national races.

United Nations General Assembly resolution 49/213 requests UNESCO to prepare for the conclusion of the Year a declaration of principles and a programme of action as a follow-up to the Year, and to submit them to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. We are pleased to learn that UNESCO has now adopted the Declaration of Principles.

My delegation believes that establishment of a culture of tolerance in place of a culture of violence is a long-term and monumental task which will have to be carried out until such a time as there no longer remains room in our collective consciousness for intolerance and violence. In this regard, we attach great importance to the role of education, through which the youth of the world can be taught ethical thinking and can be made to realize the virtues of tolerance and peace.

It is our collective moral duty to contain and stop the spread of intolerance. As the world has become more democratic and interdependent, tolerance has become an indispensable virtue. It has also become a condition for the survival of mankind, as rightly pointed out during the Year. With the proclamation of the Year and the holding of various forums for the Year, it appears that we have been able to alert the international community to the profound dangers of intolerance and its manifestations. My delegation believes that we have reached a stage where we should start taking concrete steps for the establishment of an enduring culture of tolerance and peace.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of the United States of America.

Mrs. Moutoussamy-Ashe (United States): As we observe the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, it is important to recognize and celebrate the principles deeply rooted in the foundation of this institution, especially those of human rights. Never before have the aspirations of people around the world for democracy, justice and peace been so fully articulated.

During this time of celebration, however, we must not forget that the simple message of tolerance, which is enshrined in the world's religions, and which underpins civil and political rights, cannot be taken for granted. There are those who would take to the air-waves to send bloodthirsty messages and incite listeners to murder and destruction; there are hate crimes, which expose the ugly face of intolerance and racism in places that we might otherwise consider idyllic. We are all a long way from knowing how to live peaceably with one another — which is what tolerance is all about.

A commitment to tolerance and human rights lies at the heart of the United States. Our country was born in the promise of universal freedom and settled by people from all over the world. In fact, ours is probably the most ethnically and religiously diverse nation in the world. This diversity fostered a commitment to tolerance, reflected in the Constitution and the structure of our democratic system of government. Enshrined in the United States system of law are the following rights: political and civil rights that enable all people to practice their own culture; the right of all persons, members of minorities or otherwise, to practice their own religion;

the freedom of opinion and expression; the freedom of association and assembly; and equality under the law.

We would be the first to admit that our laws and institutions have had their difficult moments during our history, and that even today they bear improving. We recognize that the struggle to create and maintain a society with liberty and justice for all is an ongoing process. But I would highlight these rights and freedoms, which allow Americans to promote and exercise tolerance in their personal and political lives. They have been tested time after time, not only here, but in all parts of the world, and they have withstood each test, confirming over and over that there is a universal human element at their core.

The Vienna Declaration emphasized that human rights education, training and public information were essential for stable and harmonious relations between communities. The American education system incorporates instruction in civil and political rights, from grammar and secondary school through the college and university levels, to ensure that citizens are aware of their rights. Furthermore, all human rights treaties can be readily obtained from the Government or virtually any public or private library.

I cannot neglect the vital role played by non-governmental organizations in keeping the United States system true to its ideals. Thousands of such organizations serve as watchdogs, through education, through reporting and through the defence of human rights in our legal system.

Overseas, the United States is firmly committed to the protection and promotion of internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms around the world. The United States is at present a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. Both of these instruments provide standards which all countries should strive to meet in order to promote civil and peaceful societies.

In many regions of the world, radical nationalism is on the rise and threatens minorities of all types, particularly religious minorities. The United States defends religious freedom internationally on many levels. At the United Nations and in other international forums we have taken the lead to oppose the egregious record of several countries. Similarly, in bilateral meetings we raise our concerns about disturbing trends of religious intolerance. We have devised a system which educates United States political asylum officers about the situation of religious groups around the world, ensuring people's rights to seek asylum.

The United States welcomes the declaration of the Year for Tolerance and we look forward to working with the United Nations and other organizations to continue the promotion of tolerance and human rights, which are essential elements of peace and democracy.

Although we are coming to the end of the Year for Tolerance, we will not succeed in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all unless we continue to celebrate tolerance in the future. The United Nations Year for Tolerance is not only a tribute and commitment to human rights, but is a tribute and commitment to those, seen and unseen, who have stood in the face of intolerance and fought back with dignity. We must not forget their faces, or their struggle. We must continue to honour their commitment to human rights with the same determination, because it is now our own.

A discussion of tolerance and respect for civil and political rights brings me to a subject of grave concern to my Government.

The United States abhors the recent acts of the Nigerian Government. The executions on 10 November of environmental and human rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others violated numerous provisions of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights to which Nigeria is a party. The failure of the Nigerian Government to convict these individuals after a fair trial, embodying due process of law, calls into question the Abacha regime's commitment to restore Nigeria to democracy and the rule of law. Ultimately, these acts underscore the regime's refusal to abide by the most basic international standards of human rights.

In response to the outrages committed by the Nigerian military regime by these executions, my Government has taken a number of unilateral steps. These include the recall of the United States Ambassador in Lagos; a ban on the sale to Nigeria of military goods and services, and on repairs; and an extension of our ban on visas, which currently prohibits the entry into the United States of senior military officials and senior Government officials and their families, to include also all military officers and civilians who actively formulate, implement or benefit from the policies that impede Nigeria's transition to democracy.

By these measures we wish to signal to Nigeria's military Government that it must not be permitted to engage in conduct against its citizens that violate international norms of justice and decency, and that the time has come for it to expedite the transition to democratic rule. The General Assembly should not allow those intolerable actions to pass by unnoticed. We urge all Member States to join the United States in taking similar unilateral steps against the Nigerian regime. My Government will be working with other delegations which share our sense of outrage to formulate an appropriate collective response.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of India.

Mr. Singla (India): It is not just a fortuitous coincidence that the international Year for Tolerance in 1995 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi, India's greatest leader and the twentieth century's greatest apostle of non-violence and tolerance. The celebrating and observance of the Year for Tolerance enjoin us to recall that if Member States are to lead the United Nations to successfully maintain international peace and security there is only one path to follow, and that is the path of tolerance and non-violence.

The United Nations Year for Tolerance was conceived in the wake of the post-cold-war surge in conflicts arising out of the phenomenon of intolerance based on ethnic, religious or national extremism in recent years. India was a sponsor of this proposal by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) from the outset. India joined in this very important endeavour because it is my delegation's conviction that any new world order has to be based on tolerance for each other's viewpoints, social and cultural differences, religious diversity and ideological and other beliefs. If the new world order is to be a lasting one, it cannot be predicated on coercion, threats, sanctions or the use of force.

Tolerance has many aspects, and it is necessary to implement each one of those if the efforts of the United Nations to keep peace are to succeed. The basic cause of most conflicts in which the United Nations has been forced to intervene has been intolerance. The situation the United Nations has faced in the former Yugoslavia illustrates this reality most graphically. Hostility and intolerance have divided a formerly vibrant nation. In this United Nations Year for Tolerance an important lesson that we in the United Nations need to imbibe is that conflict-prevention or peace can be achieved not through encouraging intolerance and violence which follows, but through support for pluralism, multi-ethnic societies and democratic mechanisms which tolerate diversity.

Tolerance means living together in harmony to profit from diversity, not killing each other to consolidate differences. It is unfortunate that in their often misguided enthusiasm to rush into peace-keeping, the more powerful members of the United Nations have ignored this basic wisdom that is part of our civilization and cultures. Tolerance implies that the United Nations should take a longer-term, wider view of how the world order should evolve, rather than the short-term view of conflicts, which invariably ends up in seeking solutions through military intervention.

Above all, within the United Nations there is a need for tolerance. The same democratic principles as nations apply in their own countries to get the widest possible consensus for policy-making need to be practised in this international Organization of diverse big and small countries.

India from the beginning of civilization has been a land open to foreign peoples, influences, ideas and cultures. Our most ancient texts spoke of the place of man, as only one of the creations in the universe and the need for him to live in harmony with other creatures of nature. Our philosophers and rulers have recognized at all times that tolerance for another human being is not only a virtue, but a necessity in any civilized and just society. Non-violence was preached in India by Lord Mahavira and Lord Buddha more than 2,500 years ago; Indian emperors, such as Ashoka, renounced war; others, such as Akbar, propagated the unifying oneness in all great thought and beliefs.

On 16 November 1995 a Declaration of Principles on Tolerance was adopted by UNESCO in Paris. We would commend to all delegations study of this Declaration and its implementation in our common pursuit of peace, which must be based on non-violence and tolerance.

The value of tolerance and its importance in international affairs needs to be widely recognized and promoted. Considering the crucial role which the mass media play today in influencing policies, my delegation would appeal to the media to play a pro-active role in promoting tolerance and reducing conflicts. While

reporting on conflict-situations, the media should primarily focus on conflict-reduction and resolution through tolerance — not on promoting hatred or encouraging dissension to make more interesting copy.

In this context, we strongly support the idea of human rights education at all levels. Tolerance should be taught to children in all countries at an early age. Here the study of other cultures cannot be sufficiently emphasized. Lack of such teaching and knowledge, even in countries that can well afford them, particularly at the school level, gives rise to a sense of false superiority which could lead to hostility and intolerance in children and adults. Tolerance comes not only with understanding, but also with acceptance. The concept of equality is inherent in such acceptance. We should all benefit from the collective wisdom of every culture and way of life.

The role of the United Nations agencies, particularly of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UNESCO, should be to focus on the idea that tolerance begins at home. Non-governmental organizations have played an important role in promoting communications and knowledge. We must beware of those organizations that preach hatred, violence and division, and we should have the courage to condemn them. In India, the non-governmental organizations have an important role in promoting inter-communal harmony, and the interests of disadvantaged groups such as women, children and the tribes. They recognize that the best way to promote these objectives is to work together with democratically elected Governments. This is in sharp contrast to several free-wheeling international non-governmental organizations that target democratic Governments and give solace to groups supporting intolerance and violence.

The importance of tolerance was recognized by the founding fathers of the United Nations. One of the ways that they laid down in the Charter to meet the objectives that they defined in the Preamble was the practice of tolerance and living together in peace with one another as good neighbours. The Indian classic "The Bhagvad Gita" defined certain virtues which form the very essence of tolerance:

> "Non-violence, truth, freedom from anger, renunciation, serenity, aversion to fault-finding, sympathy for all beings, peace from greedy cravings, gentleness, modesty and steadiness".

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Alakwaa (Yemen) (*interpretation from Arabic*): As we commemorate today the United Nations Year for Tolerance we should recall the values, the norms and the lofty principles taught by our noble religion, Islam. Islam calls for tolerance, coexistence, fraternization, cooperation and forgiveness of offences. It is unfortunate indeed that there are some who would accuse this religion of things that are not of Islam. If there are some Muslims who, by their irresponsible behaviour which degenerates sometimes to the levels of fanaticism, violence and terrorism, do a disservice to Islam, this should not give licence to denigrators to accuse Islam of things that it is innocent of, things it does not teach, call for or encourage. Islam is a civilized religion of peace and love. In it there is a place for all shades of opinion. It calls for dialogue, for understanding and for the settlement of disputes by peaceful means. In this respect, God has said:

> "And argue with them in ways that are best,"
>
> (Suza, 16, verse 125)
>
> "Then he between whom and thee was hatred becomes as it were thy friend and intimate."
>
> (Suza, 41, verse 34)

We acceded in the 1980s to the two international covenants and, regardless of economic, financial and technical difficulties, we seek to implement them, as well as other relevant international instruments that deal with issues of human rights, in a manner that would not contradict the principles of the Islamic Sharia, which guarantees for all their freedoms and fundamental rights.

Human rights committees, both public and private, have been set up in our country. They cooperate with the competent Government authorities in safeguarding and guaranteeing human rights and fundamental freedoms, in the interests of the individual and society alike.

Beyond our national borders — in other words, on the international scene — we note some situations wherein the international community found itself obliged to intervene for obvious humanitarian reasons, and for that we are grateful indeed. However, we also note other situations in which humanitarian considerations got mixed up with political interests and thus called into doubt the credibility and impartiality of such intervention. There are also other cases wherein the international community showed hesitation and did not intervene promptly, so that when it did intervene, its intervention was too little too

late. There is, of course, the trampling of Arab human rights in the Arab territories that have continued to be occupied since 1967. In certain other situations, tardy intervention resulted in massacres and the rape of thousands of women and girls, as in the case of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The perpetrators of those crimes must be tried by the International Criminal Tribunal and duly punished.

In our view, the increasing awareness of the need to uphold human rights and fundamental freedoms is closely and organically linked to and essential for the progress of society and the advancement of its members at the economic, political, cultural and social levels. We believe, therefore, that all these aspects must be borne in mind and addressed as a whole.

In conclusion, we should like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for his efforts, and in particular his recommendations on promoting the primacy of the rule of law and the need to help developing countries in this field. We hope that these recommendations, contained in document A/50/653, will be approved and implemented.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Romania.

Mr. Mazilu (Romania): I should like to say at the outset that my delegation welcomes this plenary debate on the United Nations Year for Tolerance. Also, we subscribe to the statement made by the delegation of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

At the same time, my delegation would like to comment on this remarkable event in international life. It is our firm belief that our task today is to exchange views and thoughts not only on the achievements of the United Nations Year for Tolerance, but also on both possible and necessary actions to be taken in the future in this field by the United Nations Member States, and governmental and non-governmental organizations.

First, regarding the Year's achievements, a great number and variety of international actions were organized during this period. This indicates the success of this useful and timely initiative. In previous years we all witnessed, and actively took part in, a series of big, historic changes that truly marked a new beginning in the strenuous efforts to achieve the noble ideals of the United Nations: peace, understanding and cooperation.

We believe that the most valuable gain in this respect is that the International Year for Tolerance has triggered, worldwide, regional and national activities that are to be continued and enriched in the coming years.

My country, Romania, has played, and continues to play, an active part in this course of action. Besides its continuous support for and participation in the international events organized by the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Romania undertook to thoroughly play its role in this respect at the regional and national levels.

First, together with other members of the Council of Europe, my country participated in the current work of the European Commission against racism, xenophobia, anti-semitism and intolerance, and it is dedicated to strengthening guarantees against all forms of discrimination. The Commission is also evaluating the effectiveness of the range of measures taken by member States to combat these evil phenomena.

Secondly, in December 1994 youth representatives from all over Europe, including Romania, launched at Strasbourg the European youth campaign against racism, xenophobia, anti-semitism and intolerance. In this respect, delegates of Romanian non-governmental organizations, all parliamentary political parties, youth organizations and governmental agencies decided to create a permanent foundation that has organized throughout the year colloquiums, seminars, workshops and especially "weeks of tolerance", with the participation of many young people from Romania and other countries.

Thirdly, this year, in May, Bucharest hosted the International Seminar on Tolerance, organized by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Council of Europe and the Government of Romania, in cooperation with UNESCO. It was the largest joint meeting of the members of these organizations in 1995 in this field. Benefiting from the participation of distinguished international personalities and representatives of more than 70 non-governmental organizations, this seminar marked — through exchanges of views and experience — the unfolding of the Year's campaign for tolerance, especially with regard to ways and means of promoting tolerance through the media, education and cultural activities in the daily life of local communities.

The participants concentrated their analysis on the necessary actions against intolerance and on the promotion of tolerance, including legal measures and involving law enforcement, local authorities and non-governmental organizations. The main topics were intolerance in all its aspects, such as racism, xenophobia, anti-semitism, religious fundamentalism and aggressive nationalism; the role of civic society; the impact of public opinion; the importance of early warning; and actions at the national and international levels.

The complexity of the restoration of peace in many long-troubled regions has been pointed out. The new spirit of good-neighbourliness and the speedy expression and consolidation of democracy, as well as the rule of law, in countries of all continents have enhanced the protection and promotion of human rights. The growing awareness of global problems and of the need for increased cooperation and partnership in dealing with these problems have given rise to new challenges for the international community and all its actors.

It has been stressed that, as a result of years of oppression and tyranny, today, at the end of the cold war, some countries are still facing tensions between different groups. Ethnic, cultural, religious and social conflicts, unfortunately, still exist in many regions.

After the cold war, hopes were directed towards an appeased Europe and a peaceful world, in which everybody could live in respect, understanding and cooperation. But the geo-political map of Europe received a new face, and, in the place of yesterday's demons, new demons — hatred, aggression, non-tolerance — sprang up. According to the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Sweden's Uppsala University, between 1989 and 1994 at least 90 armed conflicts only four of which were inter-State conflicts, occurred in the world. The remaining 86 were civil wars over territorial and political issues, and ethnic and religious conflicts. As the President of Romania has pointed out, lasting peace and security in Europe could be built only on the basis of respect, understanding and cooperation among all countries in the process of their integration in the European structures. Romania lies at a crossroad where various cultures and civilizations interact and for this reason

> "the Romanian society has developed an open spirit of understanding and tolerance".

That was said at the International Seminar in May. During this important debate it was noted several times, very truly, that tolerance means respecting others' rights, learning to listen to, communicate with and understand others, appreciating cultural diversity and differences, being free from prejudices, rejecting extremism and separation and having a positive attitude towards others. Indeed, tolerance is a part of human rights culture, a part of the culture of peace.

The time has come to consolidate, both on the national and international levels, the human rights system, based on generally accepted standards and norms. As the United Nations, UNESCO and their Member States have pointed out the major significance of tolerance is as an indispensable corollary of democracy, but also as a tool for the long-term prevention of tension and conflicts and an important means of safeguarding peace.

It is our belief that the end of the United Nations Year for Tolerance does not mean also the end of United Nations actions for promoting tolerance as an essential factor for world peace. In our delegation's view, the experience gathered during the international Year for Tolerance should be used for our future activities, in order to heighten public awareness of the threat to peace presented by a lack of tolerance between nations, between communities, between individuals, even.

Taking into account that the end of the Year for Tolerance comes at a time when we are witnessing in some regions of the world a steady and, in some respects, even increasing number of acts of intolerance, our delegation considers it necessary that the United Nations, UNESCO and other international organizations should continue to focus their efforts, at least in the following three directions: first, to influence public opinion in favour of tolerance by demonstrating — through the media and through more efficient education — how tolerance is linked to the peaceful coexistence of all peoples and all segments of society; secondly, to deter and combat any act of intolerance, such as racism, xenophobia, discrimination, segregation and separatism, and to continue efforts to build the lives of our societies and communities on the basis of tolerance; and thirdly, to educate young people, inparticular, in the spirit of tolerance, of recognition and acceptance of individual differences, and in the spirit of the recognition that no single culture, nation or religion has the monopoly of knowledge or truth, and to demonstrate how each individual can fight against intolerance.

We have to do everything in our power to continue and develop United Nations initiatives to promote tolerance beyond 1995, so that education for tolerance may become a permanent concern on both the national and the international levels. As one of the world's greatest thinkers, François Marie Arouet de Voltaire, pointed out in 1763 in his famous *Treatise on Tolerance*, education for tolerance is a noble and permanent task of every society, and intolerance is an expression of primitive behaviour, and tolerance of educated and civilized behaviour.

My country reaffirms its commitment to fundamental ideals of the United Nations such as peace, understanding and cooperation. We are therefore determined to continue to work together with all other Member States in order to make our societies more tolerant, through respect, recognition and acceptance of the rights and freedoms of everyone.

Programme of work

Mr. Pibulsonggram (Thailand), Vice-President, in the Chair.

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that on Monday, 27 November, in the afternoon, agenda item 20, "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", including sub-items (a) to (d), will be considered together with agenda item 154, "Participation of volunteers, 'White Helmets', in activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development".

Similarly, on Tuesday, 5 December, in the morning, agenda item 39, "Law of the sea", will be considered together with sub-item (c) of agenda item 96, "Sustainable use and conservation of the marine living resources of the high seas".

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.